

## EDITORIAL.

A LIVE MAN is readily distinguished from a dead one, and if the man is alive to some important interest it needs no search light or committee of investigation to make the fact apparent. The statement applies no less forcefully to bodies of men than to individuals. At the recent meeting at Rochester a ninth part of the time occupied by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in its annual sessions was set apart to the exclusive control of the botanists by the establishment of a botanical section. This came about chiefly through the efforts of the non-botanical members of the society, who said that the botanists were so numerous and active, had so many and valuable papers, were such an important element, that it was their due; and so while mathematics and astronomy must share rooms, officers and time, as well as geology and geography and some other subjects, botany has an exclusive portion. It was evident to the Association that the botanists constituted a live body.

That this appearance of activity, which did not escape even those who probably possess but an indistinct notion of the domain of botany, is well grounded, was abundantly demonstrated during the sessions in numerous ways, and in none better than in the action upon the question of a stable nomenclature. In the most business like manner, and with an enthusiasm, directness and good feeling which would have done credit to any deliberative body, the question that for years has been supposed to endanger the rational progress of the science and in the hands of the more youthful and radical advocates threatened to plunge American botany into chaos, was taken up, discussed, the most important features formulated and agreed to, a delegate to the convention at Genoa appointed, the money to defray his expenses subscribed, and the mission to secure the co-operation of the botanists of Europe begun before the session at Rochester had closed. The results of the Congress at Genoa have been most satisfactory, and are especially flattering to the foresight and zeal of American botanists, whose views have received marked consideration.

There is, therefore, no reason to think that the botanists of this country cannot do well whatever they undertake. There is furthermore no reason to suppose that they will shirk a manifest responsibility; and yet they are dangerously near such a point. Whether they desired it or not, the impression has become widely established that a botanical congress will be held next year. The World's Congress Auxiliary attempted to secure the co-operation of the botanists, and offered them the use of the machinery of that organization, including



free publication of their proceedings, but the proposition has been rejected.

To be sure, a committee has been appointed to arrange a program of subjects for next year's meeting at Madison. But no enthusiasm has yet manifested itself. It is, however, certainly true that the circumstances are particularly propitious for the largest, the most cosmopolitan, the most notable gathering in 1893 that botany has ever had in this country. There will be a number of distinguished foreign specialists in attendance, and the fame and benefits of the convention will not be confined within our own geographical borders.

If there is a single botanist, or any number of botanists, who has a suggestion, a word of encouragement to the committee, or any opinion regarding the project, now is the time to give it expression through the journals. Silence means apathy, but what is wanted is enthusiasm.

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## CURRENT LITERATURE.

### Canadian Mosses.<sup>1</sup>

The Catalogue of Canadian Plants has now reached the mosses. The list with its annotations and descriptions of new species makes an octavo pamphlet of nearly 300 pages. Mr. Macoun has been a most industrious collector and the Herbarium of the Geological Survey will need to be consulted now by every student of our moss flora. Since 1861 he has been accumulating the material which is here elaborated. 953 species are listed, and numerous varieties, a considerably greater number than were included in 1884 in Lesquereux & James Manual for the whole of North America.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Macoun was not more cautious in the choice of bryologists to work up these rich collections. Undoubtedly he has found many new species; but no one can believe that 237<sup>2</sup> out of 953 are previously undescribed! Both Kindberg, who has been his chief collaborator, and Müller are looked upon by the best bryologists as too much inclined to establish species upon insufficient material and slight differences (to put the case mildly). Indeed the catalogue itself bears abundant evidence of this tendency.

A comparison of the determinations of the centuries of Canadian

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<sup>1</sup>MACOUN, JOHN and KINDBERG, N. C. — Catalogue of Canadian Plants. Part VI. — Musci, (Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada.) 8vo. pp. viii, 295. Montreal: printed for the government by W. F. Brown and Co. 1892. —25 cents.

<sup>2</sup>Fide Mrs. E. G. Britton in *Bull. Torr. Bot. Club*.